



U.S. Department of Justice

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EVENT: Indictment

Defendant: Thomas L. Mercer

**FORMER H&R BLOCK TAX PREPARER
INDICTED FOR FRAUD AND OBSTRUCTION**

A tax preparer formerly employed by H&R Block was indicted by a federal grand jury in Detroit last week and charged with filing false federal income tax returns for a number of his clients and with obstructing the IRS's investigation of his conduct, announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy. Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by Maurice Aouate, Special Agent in Charge of the Detroit Field Office of the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigation Division.

Named in the 30-count indictment, unsealed today upon his arrest, was Thomas L. Mercer, 59, a resident of Romulus. During much of the period covered by the Indictment, Mercer was a tax preparer at an office of H&R Block in Dearborn, Michigan. Mercer is charged in 23 counts with aiding in the preparation and filing of Forms 1040 that claimed false and fraudulent deductions for expenses and tax credits that made it appear that the taxpayers were owed large refunds. He is also charged in six counts

with obstructing the due administration of the Internal Revenue laws by providing instructions to some of his clients about what to tell investigators and by providing them with documents purporting to justify some of the expense deductions.

“At this time of year it is important that taxpayers remember that they are ultimately responsible for their tax returns, no matter who prepares them. The taxpayer may be subject to fines and penalties if the tax returns are false. Our tax system relies on the honesty of all citizens,” said U.S. Attorney Murphy.

Special Agent in Charge Aouate said, “At the IRS, protecting taxpayer money is a matter we take extremely serious. “No one is entitled to an undeserved windfall and refunds should only be issued to taxpayers who are entitled to them. CI will continue to aggressively pursue those who file or promote the filing of false tax returns.”

Mr. Murphy noted that H&R Block fully cooperated with and provided valuable assistance to the government’s criminal investigation, which was conducted by the Criminal Investigation Division of IRS.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial at which it will be the government’s burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.